

Nation




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Attawapiskat is not alone

Steve Bonspiel, *The Eastern Door*

When you look at the situation our Cree brothers and sisters in the community of Attawapiskat, Ontario find themselves in, you can't help but draw parallels to Eeyou Istchee.

Both sides of James Bay are inhabited by Crees – who are related by blood, by common experience, language and culture – but one glaring difference remains.

Money.

While the Crees on this side of James Bay have prospered from deals signed with Quebec and Canada, those on the west side of the bay have languished in sheer poverty.

There are similarities, such as mines and increased development, but after the Grand Council's big deal with Quebec premier Bernard Landry in 2002 (the Paix des Braves), money became much less of an issue.

But with it came other problems.

One of the best lines from the documentary, *One More River*, which covered the Paix des Braves agreement, came after the signing of the deal in Waskaganish.

"Our pockets are full of money, but our hearts are broken," said a Cree woman.

She made a good point.

Technically the Crees on the Quebec side are better off than the Ontario branch of the family, but that hardly means things are hunky dory over here.

There were too many things given up, too many rivers and too much wildlife that was negatively affected – chased off the land in the name of development, mercury poisoning and an increase in poaching is a change from hunting and fishing out on the land in the past where visitors were few and far between.

From the Quebec deal Crees will see \$3.5 billion over 50 years. Throw in another \$1 billion-plus from Canada after Ottawa admitted – not surprisingly – to not holding up its end of the James Bay and Northern Quebec

Agreement, and you have a nation that is wealthier than most other Aboriginal nations.

But where's the concern for Attawapiskat? Where's the urgent call to action after so many years of neglect?

It's not coming, but thanks to the media, the Tories' horrible record with Native people has been exposed.

So here's the question:

If the government won't stand up for communities like Attawapiskat – and there are many others across Canada who have the same problems – then who will?

Many communities have decided that enough is enough. They will not stand idly by while the Conservative government ignores basic needs, while people die from disease and suicide because they have been neglected and forgotten by Big Brother, who only cares about the bottom line.

Crees on this side of James Bay, in places like tiny Eastmain, have helped by sending food and clothing to Attawapiskat doing what the Tories have failed to do.

Truth is, these politicians would rather see us turn into non-Natives than to retain our distinct character, which has existed long before they ever came over.

It was never as obvious as when Chiefs from across Canada had an impromptu march on Parliament Hill.

Mushkegowuk Council Grand Chief Stan Louttit said, "We are saying no to these governments who want to come to us and put us aside just like we are animals, just like we are nothing. Chief Spence is struggling; her people are slowly dying while this is going on."

The RCMP showed up shortly before Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence was about to speak.

"This is our land," Batchewana Chief Dean Sayers told a RCMP officer who relied, "I understand, but this is Canadian land right now."

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photo by:
Will Nicholls

Speech... speech

By Sonny Orr



I recently had the honour of being recognized as the Economic Developer Officer of the Year at the annual gala held by the Eeyou Economic Group, which is directed by my peers from the other Cree communities. As I thought about what I would say and which speech mode I should shift into – gracious, casual, documental – the emcee stifled my preparation when he requested the winners keep it short and sweet. Might as well stick my thumb up and flash a toothy smile for all anyone cares. So... I decided to share my winning speech with all those who couldn't witness my moment of glory.

The wild North – strong, free and pretty damn cold in the winter – makes it difficult for even the most confident crowd pleaser to choke back on a few ideas that should work or go bust up here. When I first arrived in the Whapmagoostui area, known back then as Great Whale River, there seemed to be an awful lot of sand, rocks and water. Seagulls were quite plentiful, making 2-Mile Beach's surf tantalizing, if you are able to stand the 3° water temperature for long enough.

The summer days seem endlessly clear and blue, punctuated with a severe coastal fog that conveniently appears just before the big jet aircrafts would swoop in, making it a hazardous trip on bad weather days. This was the near the end of the Cold War, when the Russians were our biggest enemy and only the toxic-waste dumps of radar sites and camps strewn across the North reminded us that we were closer to peace than ever. Little did we know at that time, about the world around us.

I came back over the years to see little had changed, and you could always depend on GWR to look busy, no matter what time of the day it was. The clear blue skies dotted occasionally with clouds brought back the reality that you really were in an isolated town somewhere in northern Quebec.

Then some buildings started going up that made the community grow – a new band office, a fully equipped triple gymnasium, a new town hall in Kujjuarapik, actual running water and sewage infrastructure, new day-cares, youth centre and the arena. Then a new swimming pool and new restaurant, before the internet and cellphone service gently nudged the community into the 21st century. You could say, that the community grew with its new population growth.

When I looked at these resources turn into jobs and businesses, I look at the possibilities that the youth can come up with. While my baby-boom generation rebelled against our parents and the system, the upcoming generation will just create a new system altogether of doing business. We are already in an age where information is the new resource and managing all that information will take oodles of supercomputers, though it still takes a human to unpack it and plug it into the wall. Such is the future, where technology breaks all boundaries and brings the world to your iPod or to your massive yet thin 3DTV.

I can't wait for the day when I will be able to watch the local team play in another town live delivered by fibre cable to my living room. I can't wait to see the day when kids trained at home on their computers pass their final exams and then quietly go to check the net for fish in one of the many pristine lakes that cover the entire North.

I can't wait for the day when parents are able to learn things from their long-dead ancestors through the teachings of their own grandchildren via interactive education that makes the world the classroom. Imagine, no more textbooks that barely explain things in simple terms, when you can learn live about another culture from the other side of the world and vice versa.

I am just laying the foundation for those dreams which may one day fuel our economic future by making sure that we develop surely and solidly, one dream at a time...

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Where's the heat?

Chisasibi and Wemindji deal with an unexpected power outage

By Jesse B. Staniforth

news

The communities of Chisasibi and Wemindji declared a state of emergency on Monday, December 5, following a total power outage that left homes and public buildings without heat at a time when windchills were reaching down into the -30s.

At press time, emergency supplies of generators, stoves, firewood, propane, flashlights and blankets were beginning to arrive from a variety of sources, including the Cree Regional Economic Enterprise Company (CREECO INC.) and Kepa Transport, Hydro-Québec and the Red Cross.



During the night of December 6, Hydro-Québec teams were able to make temporary repairs that have helped to restore power to roughly 35% of homes in Chisasibi, though no power has yet reached Wemindji.

The power outage began at roughly 9am Monday morning, after two of the transformers blew at the La Grande-1 (LG-1) power station in James Bay. Though residents were initially told to expect power to be returned by the end of the day, band councils were informed that afternoon that the outage could last more than two days. At 5pm, they declared a state of emergency.

At press time, the power outages have continued more than 48 hours, and officials at Hydro-Québec cannot say how much longer it will continue.

Luc Duquette, Hydro-Québec's Aboriginal Relations and Projects Advisor, said, "For the moment, we're still counting in days, but we don't know how many days. It will be some time longer."

Hydro-Québec is bringing in a total of 16 generators from the region and around Quebec to help supply power during the outage. Six are destined for Chisasibi, while 10 will go to Wemindji. Some are already in place, but all are expected to be operational by the morning of Friday, December 9.

Duquette explained that the generators are dedicated to those public buildings identified by community authorities.

"We are updating and adjusting to [communities'] needs as they develop," said Duquette. "We have Hydro-Québec people in place to make sure that generators are connected according to the priorities of local authorities."

There has been no need for evacuation thus far, reported Jonathan Saganash of CREECO Inc., though there are two Air Creebec planes ready should the need arise. CREECO Inc. and Kepa Transport have delivered at least one truckload of stoves, stove pipes, flashlights, batteries and propane to the affected communities.

"Everything is under control," said Saganash. "The local people on

the scene are doing a great job of keeping people informed. I had a talk with the Red Cross, and they're holding back for now since we've stepped in, but they've helped us by providing blankets."

Wemindji Chief Rodney Mark said the priority is getting generators in place to return power to public buildings. As a result, they can provide a warm place of refuge for those unable to heat their homes with wood.

Mark reported that the community is handling the outage well, but it is a severe difficulty for everyone.

"I'm not really satisfied with Hydro-Québec," said Mark, "but we're going to bring that up afterwards. Right now, we need to work together to get something going."

Quebec Native Affairs Minister Geoff Kelley said the delay in returning power to the communities is partly due to the frailty of the system.

"The network is fragile," said Kelley. "They don't want to go in too quickly. Chisasibi is closer to LG-1, so that's why they're getting the power back first. Wemindji is a good 250 kilometres away, so it's a bit trickier, but certainly we are open to increasing the number of generators there. We'll just have to see how long it's going to take to fix the problem."

Kelley said the quick response of community members has prevented a serious disaster. "In small communities, they work together to find the resources necessary. There's a wonderful spirit of neighbourliness."

Echoing this sentiment, Saganash said, "I really care about my shareholders. I'm a Cree person and it's just the human thing to do. All together we stand. We'll never forget to help one another when it's needed."



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Bringing justice home

Oujé-Bougoumou opens up a new justice centre

By Akiva Levitas

news

On November 29, the community of Oujé-Bougoumou opened the doors to its brand-new justice facility that will be serving the community and surrounding region. The building will give the public access to the justice system and allow them to actively participate. This accessibility will also provide jobs as well as role models for the community.

This event comes just a few weeks after the signing of the Complementary Agreement 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and one week after the Cree Cultural Institute opened up its beautifully designed headquarters and museum in the community.

Even though it is good to be finally admitted into the Agreement, Oujé-Bougoumou Chief Reggie Neeposh said, "The Agreement we signed was about something deeper – it was about finally making things right, and redressing an injustice."

The new justice centre will be one of nine that are being set up in all of the Cree communities in Eeyou Istchee. With a justice centre in the area, people will not have to travel far to go to court. This access will increase the awareness of how the legal system works in Quebec and how it can be used to fight for people's rights.

The facility will serve the community to the standards of the federal and provincial courts but these justice centres have another important role. They will serve the Cree community with respect to the traditional Cree practices in regards to conflict resolution and combine them with the laws of Quebec and Canada.

The ceremonies began with a traditional prayer followed by the speeches from the honoured guest justices as well as Chiefs of the community and administration. Speaking at the event were Chief Neeposh, Grand Chief



Matthew Coon Come, Judge Claude Bigué, Judge Jocelyn Geoffroy and Judge Ivan St. Julien.

Coon Come gave a presentation in the community centre about the Cree vision on the future development of the region as well as the Plan Nord. He discussed Cree governance as well as the Cree Development Corporation.

The incredible growth of Oujé-Bougoumou is the result of the community's hard work to ensure that all the resources are being put to good use and to reflect the Cree culture. In 1988, Oujé-Bougoumou had about 100 residents; today, it is around 900.

The expansion of the community and the inauguration of these new buildings and institutions will better serve its members. In regards to its look and layout, Oujé-Bougoumou is one of the most beautifully planned communities in Eeyou Istchee and the new justice centre simply adds to the town's attractiveness.

To meet the needs of its growing population, the community is seeking to build a new health clinic as well as a larger community centre. With all of these events that have happened lately, they are going to need bigger halls in Oujé-Bougoumou.

Currently, the community is being served by a traditional healing centre

which can provide only a limited range of services as opposed to a modern clinic that could service a larger populace. The administration is working with the Cree Health Board in getting a clinic set up and they hope start on the planning next year.

There are many things that must be done for this young and vibrant community to get its footing in order to properly serve its people, the leadership in the community as well as the Cree administration have this as their focus. Chief Neeposh summed it up best, "Our objective in this effort has been to ensure that, at the end of the day, we have done what we can to bring about the reestablishment of peace and harmony in our community, so that we can focus on the positive challenge of creating a healthy and dynamic community. This is our highest priority, and this is our goal."

The new justice building in Oujé-Bougoumou is only a small part of the greater plan which is to have one in all nine Cree communities. Once this is complete, the administration can focus on developing other aspects of communities based on their needs. At the rate that the facilities are being opened that goal is not too far in the future.

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During this period of rejoicing, the town of Val-d'Or would like to extend its warmest holiday wishes to the Cree Nation. May the respect and the collaboration that unites our communities perpetuate in 2012.



Ville de Val-d'Or



Fernand Trahan
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McGill students hold benefit concert in support of Attawapiskat

On December 5, McGill University's Aboriginal Sustainability Project hosted a benefit concert in support of the people of Attawapiskat and to raise



DJ Mad Eskimo goes acoustic at the recent benefit concert for Attawapiskat

awareness of the housing issues that First Nations communities across Canada face. The Aboriginal Sustainability Project is supported at McGill by First Peoples' House, the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office and the Office of the Dean of Students.

The concert featured four performers, including hip-hop performer

Joey Shaw and DJ Mad Eskimo, both of whom are Inuit and originally from Iqaluit.

A number of people also shared their stories and experiences living both on and off reserve, including three McGill students of Cree descent (Elma Moses, Mary Shem and Natasha Latter), and Professor Michael Loft, a Mohawk who, as a member of McGill's Faculty of Social Work, is deeply involved in the study of First Nations issues.

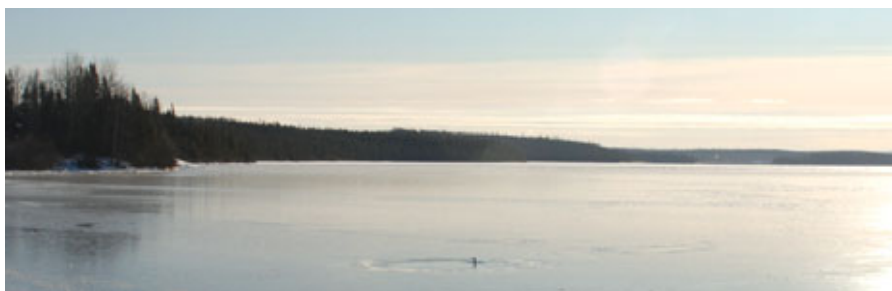
While the concert raised just over \$400, other fundraising and awareness-raising activities by the Aboriginal Sustainability Project are well underway, which not only focus on the housing crisis in Attawapiskat but also an array of other First Nations issues. The project will continue to collect

donations for Attawapiskat up until December 31.

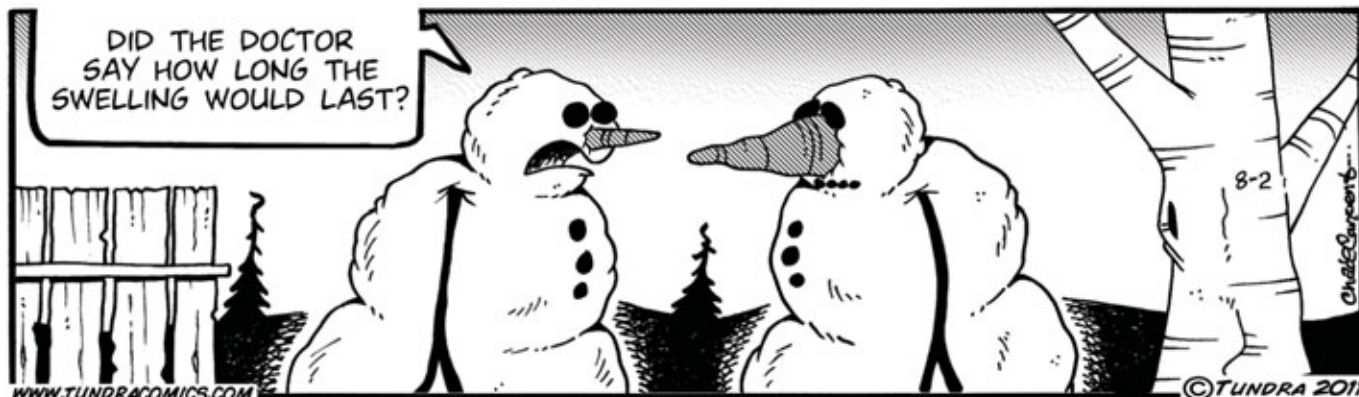
For more info, visit www.facebook.com/AboriginalSustainabilityProject

Loon gets caught in freeze

On the morning of December 2, Stanley Mianscum alerted the community of Mistissini of a loon caught in the ice. After some discussions with the tallymen and the local safety department it was decided to rescue the loon and help it continue south. Hunter Matthew Shecapio thought it probably should be eaten, but he will have to wait until spring.



Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com



"THE PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE OF OUR YOUTH THROUGHOUT THE DAY DID NOT GO UNNOTICED BY THE TOWNS PEOPLE AND DESERVES ALL THE SHOUTS AND THE HURRAYS."

Crazy about the children Waskaganish celebrates National Child's Day in style

By Pierre Coulombe



There could have been no better opportunity than National Child's Day on November 21 to allow community members of Waskaganish to organize a day of fun-filled activities for all their children. The participation and performances of our youth throughout the day did not go unnoticed and they deserve all the shout-outs and the hurrahs they got.

The day started with a community walk involving students, parents and teachers from the local schools. The young walkers held their banners proudly and made a statement about their role in the community and their importance as carriers of tradition and culture for the future of Eeyou Istchee. "Children are everything," said Daisy Stephen, community organizer for the Awash Youth Program of Cree Health Board who was busy serving the "ever-so-popular" hot chocolate beverage after an invigorating walk around the village.

The youth gathered again after lunch for an afternoon of family skating, which took place at the Sarah Stephen Memorial Arena. Their joy was obvious as youth skated around the ice freely sharing their gratefulness with their peers, the teachers and those parents who could make themselves available for the event.

The highlight of the day was the banquet at the Gathering Place held later with pizza-ghetti and cake in the children's honour. The prayer was led by Daisy Moar. The speakers were brief. Emcee Mary Hester, had the children take the micro-





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phone to speak about their talents, what they like to do and what helps them most in life. She made the children feel comfortable with the microphone allowing them to gain self-confidence and express their personalities.

Hester then made way for the entertainment portion of the evening. All entertainment was provided by the children, some of them dressed in full banquet regalia, and what an array of talent and amazing stage presence coming from these young participants. Artists came and went, most of them from elementary school levels... and all of them just blew us away. The 12 young singers "strutted their stuff" and had their moment to shine. All were extremely talented and there was consensus amongst the audience about the children's performance quality and their level of self-confidence.

A big thanks goes out to all the young artists for taking the stage. Waskaganish is harvesting quite a crop of talented performers. This included the Grade 3 French class, from the elementary school, who opened with three French songs and the lights of Denzel Berryman, Roselyn Whiskeychan, Shayleen Hester, Nicholas Hester, Damian Stephen and Bailey Hester (J'aime le chocolat, Pas de bullying and Avec mon cheval).

This was followed by Anthony Stephen on his electric guitar (Folsom Prison Blues by Johnny Cash) exhibiting some unusual skills and fine dexterity. Finally a series of talented singers followed: Kaylissa Hester and Kadence McLeod (The Lord's Prayer), Merielle Salt (The Climb by Hannah Montana), Melody Hester (Our God), Shalawna



Hester who mesmerized her audience with three songs (Rolling in the Deep by Adele, I'm Alive by Céline Dion, Angels by Jessica Simpson). Then Shayleen Hester came back "solo" with a French song (Je vais dans la forêt), which she performed perfectly.

Festivities also included three piñatas where everyone was invited to hit the donkey blindfolded. The event closed with a long gift distribution for the kids. All this took place while Anthon Stephen was manning a kiosk where he drew ad-lib and showed off his art portfolio to the curious bystanders. What an amazing day it was for our children!

The main organizers have a lot to say for themselves as contributing members of our town. The Headstart Program (Waseskun Child & Family Services), composed of Corrina Hester and Ethel Blackned, is dedicated to helping chil-

dren (ages one to five) with special needs of all sorts (including fine motor skills, speech, sensory skills and nutrition). They provide the registered parents with home visits, parental care and practical advice. And they have worked conjunctly with Sofiah Stephen (Daycare Centre) and the Awash Youth Program from the Cree Health Board and Social Services of James Bay, under Bertha Dixon and Daisy Hester, who joined to put together this amazing event for a second year in a row.

The organizers want to thank the speakers (Pastor George Hester and Elder Elizabeth Iserhoff), the volunteers (Agnes Morgan, Bessie Gillies and Marcella Napash) and Lisa Shallhorn, principal for the two local schools (Wiinibekuu High School and École Annie Whiskeychan Memorial Elementary School) and all the sponsors without whom any of this would have been possible.

The sponsors are: Waskaganish First Nation Chief & Council Gordon Blackned and Deputy Chief Thomas Hester, Pentecostal Church, Gathering Place, Waskaganish Police Department, Public Safety (Ernest Blueboy), Youth Council (Melissa Whiskeychan), Daycare Centre, Kanio-Kashee Lodge, Northern Store, Jacob's Restaurant, Blackned Construction, Cree Trappers Association, Whiskeychan Taxi and the Sarah Stephen Memorial Arena.



Wheelin' and dealin'

Eeyou Istchee's economic movers and shakers gather in Val-d'Or

By Shaun Malley



Economic Developer of the Year Award - Sidney Orr



Woman Entrepreneur Award - Pash Moar Pizza



Youth Entrepreneur Award - S&S Office Depot

December 1 marked a big day for the entrepreneurs of the Nations of Eeyou Istchee. Almost 400 people came to Val-d'Or from as far away as Nunavut to network, celebrate and discuss their future.

The people packed into the Forestel Hotel were there for two events. In the morning, the Secretariat to the Cree Nation Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance (SCNATEA) and the Comité de maximisation des retombées économiques en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (ComaxAT) hosted their annual Business Exchange Day. The Eeyou Economic Group (EEG) held its fourth annual Gala Celebrating Cree Entrepreneurs in the evening.

The Business Exchange Day started bright and early, with companies in domains as diverse as human resources, construction, mining and multimedia greeting people from booths outside the main hall. Space was at a premium. Smiling faces and handshakes could be seen throughout the day, as people did business, drank gallons of coffee and made friends.

Cree-owned businesses such as ADC and Eeyou Istchee Tourism (EIT) told many of the patrons about their services. ADC is a human-resources agency providing support staff for mining camps, construction projects and airports throughout the North.

"We send workers from the region to wherever they're needed," said ADC spokesperson Rowena Patenaude. "The whole community benefits because we work in partnership with other Cree businesses."

Like with ADC, it means more than money to the staff of EIT as well. Their goal is to raise awareness of the natural splendour of the North, reminding people that an adventure is just around the corner.

"You don't need to go very far," said Robin McGinley of EIT. "We're a regular tourist agency, but we try to get people to stay closer to home for their vacations. It's beautiful up there."

Many Eeyou Istchee leaders were present at the business exchange, including current Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come and

former Grand Chief and present President of SCNATEA Ted Moses.

Coon Come spoke to the assembly of entrepreneurs during their business luncheon. He was very upbeat about the future and wanted to allay the fears of many regarding the Plan Nord.

"This is the start of a great adventure," said Coon Come. "It's normal to be apprehensive of change, but we are in a new area where no one is excluded. This is a partnership based on equality."

Moses is equally optimistic. He has seen partnerships fostered by the Secretariat forged with companies far outside of Eeyou Istchee territories, and he sees no slowing down.

"I'm proud of what we've helped accomplish," he said. "It started in the region and now it's expanding to other provinces. We're building friendships with Native communities across Canada. Our resources need to increase, and that's why we're here today."



Natural Resources Award - Waska Ressources



Sustainable Development Award - Lindsay's Catering



Construction/Manufacturing Award - Tawich Construction, Inc.



Growth and Innovation award winner - Bedabin Gas Station



The Cree Health Board wishes you a safe and happy holiday season!

Tune in to the Cree Health Radio Show, Thursdays @ 3 pm on JBCCS.

Cree business owners spent the better part of the day meeting non-Cree entrepreneurs in a series of 15-minute micro-meetings. Preliminary deals and business cards were exchanged, and many plans to conduct future business were in place the end of the day.

Things became a little more formal as day turned into night. The venue was transformed into a glitzy ballroom in order to host that evening's gala award ceremony. Some of the entrepreneurs present for the business day stayed to collect awards and to party late into the night.

The event started off with a literal bang. As it took place on Algonquin land, the first guests to be honoured at the gala were a local drumming troupe, the Washesku and Screaming Eagle Drummers. Their pounding rhythms set the tone for a festive evening.

Moses was around to give a special talk to those assembled. As a token of thanks for his leadership, EEG presented him with a camouflaged hunting kit. He was even given a gag gift of a roll of duct tape, much to the delight of the audience.

Business leaders from across the territory were on hand to celebrate the economic success of Eeyou Istchee. Whether it was human resources or natural resources, food or office supplies, those in attendance were pleased to share the joy of victory.

Sidney Orr was one such victor. He won the award for Economic Developer of the Year for his role as Whapmagoostui Development Corporation president. Orr was a bit surprised, though he felt he'd worked hard enough to earn the award.

"I had a pretty good batting average this year," he said. "But I know other communities are aggressive and bigger, so there's a lot of stiff competition. I was very happy with the award because I know the people who got it before me, and what they accomplished for the community."

The theme of the whole day was about economic growth fuelling social progress – something about which Orr feels strongly.

"Money only solves money problems. We have to care about the long-term social development of the Cree.



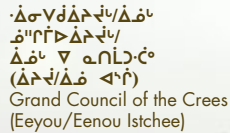
Stylin' and profilin' - Coon Come is presented with a scarf



Service Industry Award - Waska Resources



Coon Come addresses the business luncheon



Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff

May this holiday season bring you joy and happiness to you and your loved ones

Team work

CREECO Inc.'s Jonathan Saganash discusses his vision of Cree economic power

by Shaun Malley

Jonathan Saganash is the young, forward-thinking communications officer for the Cree Economic Enterprise Company (CREECO Inc.). He has big plans for the future of Eeyou Istchee but feels he's up for the challenge.

Recently, Saganash represented CREECO Inc. at the ninth edition of the Secretariat to the Cree Nation Abitibi-Témiscamingue (SCNATEA) Business Exchange Day in Val-d'Or. He discussed how the experience was a grueling, yet rewarding one.

"It was kind of like speed dating," he said in reference to the daylong series of 15-minute sessions. Non-Cree business owners would sit with Saganash, discuss potential business ideas, and exchange contact information. The end result will be worth it, according to him.

"It was very tiring, but it's such an efficient way to network," said Saganash. "It was remarkable how many companies I spoke to that day who CREECO Inc. had worked with before. It's all about sharing the services and expertise, figuring out the needs of suppliers."

"THE NEXT WAVE OF ECONOMIC CRISIS IS GOING TO COME. YES WE ARE GOING TO PAY FOR THIS, AND IT'S HAPPENED BEFORE. BUT THIS TIME WE DIDN'T KEEP OUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET. IT WILL BE TOUGH BUT WE'LL DO LIKE WE ALWAYS DO. WE CREES WILL STAND TOGETHER SIDE-BY-SIDE."

Saganash sung the praises of SCNATEA for putting the day together. Through their program, he was able to deal with companies from far and wide for a diverse range of projects.

"There are people joining up with us for many different things," Saganash said. "We clicked with a number of organizations, and it's all done through the Secretariat."



Jonathan Saganash of CREECO Inc.

When speaking about the accomplishments of Eeyou Istchee entrepreneurs, he shows pride in what he feels the people have accomplished through hard work. A willingness to partner with non-Native businesses is a part of what he sees as a formula for success.

"The Cree people are here supporting each other as we always do,"

to some competition for future contracts when the Plan Nord starts ratcheting up.

"We've worked and learned a lot in the past 10 years, especially with Hydro-Québec," Saganash said. "Some of the people working on those projects came back, used their expertise and started their own companies. There will be big contracts and we have to make sure that we team them up."

Saganash also feels that the community is ready in the event of any future economic problems. Though there have been some losses due to the global recession, Saganash believes Eeyou Istchee will get through it because of one thing: standing together.

"The next wave of economic crisis is going to come," he said. "Yes we are going to pay for this, and it's happened before. But this time we didn't keep our eggs in one basket. It will be tough but we'll do like we always do. We Crees will stand together side-by-side in order to do great things."

said Saganash. "The wave of marketing created by the Quebec government has created a lot of traffic from non-Native businesses. But people here are not surprised because we have the expertise in the North to help manage those kinds of projects."

Past work in hydroelectric projects around James Bay have been crucial to the development of a strong group of experienced workers. This could lead



A Note of Appreciation

The community of Oujé-Bougoumou has recently celebrated the signing of *Complementary Agreement No. 22 to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* which finally incorporates the community into the Cree Nation's treaty, and is now recognized on the same basis as the other Cree First Nations of Eeyou Istchee.

It is appropriate for us, at this historic moment, to acknowledge and to express our deepest appreciation to those key individuals who have worked so tirelessly for many, many years to make this event a reality.

The community of Oujé-Bougoumou is, first and foremost, indebted to its former Chief, Abel Bosum, whose dedication and commitment to seeing the dreams of our Elders realized was the driving force in the political struggle to have our right to a permanent home recognized by Quebec and Canada; the inspirational leader in the innovative planning and design of our new home, and the exceptional administrator during the construction phase to finally bring all our hopes to tangible expression in our new village. His devotion to his people and to his community spanned nearly three decades.

The torch was taken up by other Chiefs of our community, and the work continued under their leadership. Former Chiefs included Sam Bosum and Louise Wapachee.

All the way along our long journey from forgotten squatters to recognized residents of our permanent home we received the unwavering support of all the Cree Nation's Grand Chiefs: Billy Diamond, Ted Moses, Matthew Mukash, and Matthew Coon Come. We also enjoyed the consistent support of the Grand Council's Executive Director, Mr. Bill Namagoose.

Of course, the most constant support for the struggles which we have endured was from our community members themselves and the Elders who have guided us every step of the journey. Nothing would have been accomplished without the community's unified stands and without their selfless dedication to a greater cause.

That cause was understood and supported in very meaningful ways by all of the Cree First Nations, and particularly by Mistissini, Waswanipi and Waskaganish.

There were many individuals over the years who also demonstrated an extraordinary degree of commitment to advancing our cause. A few of these include: James O'Reilly, our legal counsel; Paul Wertman, our long-time advisor; Norm Hawkins, our long-time financial advisor; Roderick Pachano, the late Albert Diamond, the late Steven Bearskin, Dick Boivin, Douglas Cardinal, the late Bob Epstein, Brian Craik, Philip Awashish, the late Alayne Woodford, Pastor Enoch Hall, Kenny Blacksmith, Henry Mianscum, William Mianscum, John Longchap, Paul Gull, Charles Cato, Réjean Paul, Peter Hutchins, Diane Soroka, Jacques Frenette, Michel Blondin, Bruno Bonneville.

There are, of course, many others who are too numerous to mention. However, we must not fail to mention the endurance of the spouses of all those mentioned who graciously tolerated the absences from home while our cause was being advanced.

To all those who have been part of our journey, to those who have encouraged us, who have stood by us, and who have made our journey easier we extend our heartfelt appreciation, gratitude and thanks.

Mistameegwetch!

On behalf of the members and the Council of the Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation,

Reggie Neeposh
Chief



It's okay to blame the victim

Attawapiskat still in crisis amidst the federal government's blame game

By Amy German

Though the Ontario Cree community of Attawapiskat has been in crisis over education, housing and health for many years, since its recent time in the media spotlight over a dire housing crisis, the Canadian government has chosen to blame the community over simply handing out aid.

According to Timmins-James Bay NDP MP Charlie Angus, the federal government is playing the victim, saying that they simply weren't informed that Attawapiskat was in crisis, despite video footage showing Angus questioning Indian Affairs Minister John Duncan over Attawapiskat as early as November 4.

In late October, Angus travelled to the fly-in-only community in his riding to video the brutal conditions that the community of roughly 2000 Crees has been living in. The video showed extensive footage of how almost 100 individuals are living in a state of homelessness, with some in un-insulated shacks or tents without any plumbing, pouring human waste out of windows and others living on top of each other in a temporary shelter comprised of trailers where 90 people were sharing four showers.

At that, many of the existing homes in Attawapiskat are ravaged by mould, severely overcrowded, insufficiently heated and nearing dilapidation due to the wear-and-tear that the pressure of overcrowding has put on these buildings.

The Crees within them too are seen suffering, children covered with rashes and the community's only doctor describing how the rate of viral infections and respiratory illness is exponentially higher in Attawapiskat because of the living conditions.

Yet despite this video being posted on October 28 and Angus having questioned Duncan about the crisis in the House of Commons, the minister told CBC TV on December 1 that

he was never made aware of the situation and he went as far as blaming Angus for simply not telling him about it.

"What they have been saying is that nobody gave them a proper declaration of emergency," said Angus.

However, it was not just Attawapiskat but also neighbouring Kashechewan and Fort Albany that simultaneously declared states of emergency on October 28 due to a severe lack of housing that has forced many families out into the cold on all three reserves.

"As of November 4, Indian Affairs and Ontario were fully aware of the state of emergency and just to make it clear, because nobody had moved within that week, the community issued another state of emergency on November 12 and this is the one that I had a copy of but every other bureaucrat seems to think that this disappeared," said Angus.

What Angus said he found even more unbelievable was how the government is always pointing the finger at First Nations when it comes to financial accountability and yet it can't manage to keep track of which communities are in states of emergency.

The day after giving this interview to the Nation on November 28, Angus headed to Attawapiskat with interim NDP party leader Nycole Turmel, various other media representatives and the Red Cross, who had decided to step in and help the people of Attawapiskat.

Angus said it was the first time he had ever heard of the Red Cross doing humanitarian aid in Canada.

"Obviously the Red Cross felt that this was a legitimate state of emergency and obviously Canadians are feeling the same, because we are hearing from people across the country and in fact, across North America, all asking what the hell is happening here?

"Ironically, I have two people who are aid workers in Haiti asking how could this be happening in Canada? In fact, they were asking if they should be coming home," said Angus.

To date however, the federal government has only pledged a mere \$500,000 targeted at "remediating" some existing abandoned structures though Angus said that if a structure has been deemed no longer usable in a place like Attawapiskat then it is certainly beyond repair.

It was after a day of intense media scrutiny on the ground in Attawapiskat that the federal government made the announcement that they would be putting the community into third-party management under the guises that it was the community that had in fact mismanaged their own money and therefore their own fault they were in this situation.

Upon getting the news that she was no longer in charge of her own community after asking for help with the housing crisis, Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence told the media that





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together this Christmas, may the love of
God be extended to everyone.

As 2012 approaches, we look forward to
prosperity and success for our Cree Nation. There will
be difficult challenges that we will face as a Nation in
2012 and we know that we will not fail because
of our trust in our Creator.

May you have a wonderful and joyous Christmas
and a Happy New Year.

**THE CREES OF
THE WASKAGANISH FIRST NATION**

being placed under third-party management was “a slap in the face”.

Spence told APTN News, “This was a very poor reaction by the government. We are in crisis, so why are they putting us under third-party management? Is it because we are making noise for help?”

As a result, Angus has stated publicly that he is getting calls from Attawapiskat residents that their welfare cheques are being cut off because the community is now in receivership.

Meanwhile on December 1, Duncan just happened to bump into Angus as cameras followed the minister out of the studios at the CBC following an interview.

“We have had people in the community monthly or more often since April,” Duncan told the CBC, and yet at the same time he said his department wasn’t aware of the situation until “a few days after October 28” as neither his officials nor Charlie Angus identified the problem, he claimed.

As Duncan exited the studio area, Angus, who was coming up the same stairwell greeted him and sarcastically reminded him once again that there was a crisis in Attawapiskat, aware of the fact that the minister has been trying to shift the blame to him and the community.

“We are not dealing with casual incompetence here, this is a willful, hard-working level of incompetence where we have people who are slowly dying in sheds. This was happening under his watch and he never, ever thought it was an issue,” Angus told the CBC.

In terms of placing Attawapiskat under third-party management, Duncan has maintained that it is necessary because of the \$90 million that his department has paid out to the community as he has claimed that the community has potentially misspent the funds.

Turmel however disagrees with Duncan about the funding and claims that they are making it seem like a lot more than it actually is.

“They said they sent Attawapiskat \$90 million which is true, but that was since 2006. When you add up the figures, it actually isn’t really even enough money and we know this....

“The average social fund that is transferred to a province is about \$18,000 per person per year and then out there it is about \$6000 per person per year and so how can a municipality have the kind of budget necessary to accomplish anything in their community,” said Turmel.

At that, Spence has already said on countless occasions that the \$90 million in question has gone to a wide variety of basic necessities, such as healthcare, education and social programs, and that every cent has been accounted for under the reserve’s co-management system that INAC put in place 12 years ago.

“IRONICALLY, I HAVE TWO PEOPLE WHO ARE AID WORKERS IN HAITI ASKING HOW COULD THIS BE HAPPENING IN CANADA? IN FACT, THEY WERE ASKING IF THEY SHOULD BE COMING HOME.”

Turmel added that the government has already gone through all of Attawapiskat’s books and reported back to the department on the community’s spending but this is just a detail that they perpetually fail to mention to the media.

“The government is so concentrated on other issues that they don’t take care about the department they are responsible for and this is the main problem that we have with the Conservative government. Canadians need to ask questions and make the government more accountable for the job that they are not doing. That is what we need to do all day, every day,” said Turmel.

Back in Attawapiskat, less than 24 hours after the arrival of a third-party manager assigned by the federal government, it was announced on December 6 that Chief Spence had already sent the manager packing.

Saying that the community needs to be focused on the housing crisis and not other things, Spence told CBC News that she had informed her band manager to tell the third-party manager to leave because this is not going to work for Attawapiskat.

The manager has since left the community.

On December 6, Spence headed to Ottawa to meet with the Department of Indian Affairs. She also spoke at a meeting hosted by the Assembly of First Nations where Chiefs from across Canada had gathered.

In light of her community’s plight, Spence told the Chiefs, “It’s time to get really aggressive with the government.”

She went on to reiterate that she felt her community was being punished for speaking out but that it was time to move on and work with Ottawa without any blame.

At press time on December 7, the government had released a statement saying that they had provided funding to renovate five houses in Attawapiskat and are currently working with Emergency Measures Ontario on the ground in the community.

As for the short term, it was their recommendation that the community transform public buildings (i.e. the arena and the wellness centre) into temporary shelter.

They also urged Attawapiskat once more to work with the third-party manager.

It is not clear if the money to renovate the five homes in question is new funding on top of the aforementioned \$500,000 or additional to that.

Spence, on the other hand, marched through the streets of Ottawa to Parliament Hill to deliver her own message for the government, that this was only the beginning. She and the Chiefs were later forcibly removed by the RCMP after being told that they could not stand in the shelter of one of the Parliament buildings and had to relocate further away from the doors.

Béric Sport

**Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year to all.**

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Delicious delights for the holidays!

From our kitchen to yours, the Nation's holiday favourites

By Amy German

With the shopping all done and the tree ornaments hung, the next thing to think about for your holiday festivities is what to serve your loved ones as you celebrate the holidays.

While Christmas is a holiday that is all about tradition and familiarity, if you are looking to debut something new on your dinner table this season or if you are hosting a major meal at your house for the first time, why not try out one of our tried, tested and adored holiday recipes?

From sumptuous stuffings to sensational sweet things, Christmas is all about having the occasional delicious indulgence and so if you are going to indulge, why not go with something special from our recipe collection?

STUFFING THE FOWL

Whether you are cooking turkey or goose for the holiday meal, the one and only thing that ever really manages to upstage the fowl centerpiece of the holiday table is what is often cooked within it – the stuffing.

The following two recipes are for stuffings that we have wowed our own guests with. Our goose-stuffing recipe was one that we found on the internet by chance but became an instant classic after serving it with a goose to a table full of hungry Montreal journalists, all of whom were impressed.

The second is a turkey-stuffing recipe that my mother has used since before I was born and has appeared on every Christmas and Thanksgiving table in our house my entire life.

Wild Rice and Hazelnut Goose Stuffing

4 cups cooked wild rice
1 cup hazelnuts, coarsely chopped
2 large Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored & cubed
½ cup onion, minced
2 teaspoon dried savory
¼ cup parsley, chopped
Fresh ground pepper to taste
Salt to taste

1 to 2 tablespoons flour

If you would like to give this stuffing a nuttier taste, toast the hazelnuts on a cookie sheet in the oven or toaster oven for a few minutes on low heat prior to combining the other ingredients. Toasting any kind of nut will enhance its taste but be careful as nuts can burn very quickly. Nuts are toasted when they just begin to brown slightly. Allow to cool before using.

1) Mix together the wild rice, nuts, apples, onion, herbs, salt and pepper to taste

2) Stuff into goose

3) Skewer goose closed

4) Cook goose

5) Remove stuffing from cooked goose

6) Serve

Judi's Sausage Stuffing

2 packages of Maple Leaf bulk sausage meat

1 loaf of white bread crumbed in the blender

2 cups of chopped celery, small dice

1 large Bermuda onion, chopped, small dice

4 eggs slightly beaten with a half cup of milk

½ cup of chopped parsley

Sage - teaspoon or to taste

Savory - teaspoon or to taste

Thyme - teaspoon or to taste

Salt and pepper

1) Remove the sausage from its package and fry, crumbled in a large skillet, drain excess liquid and set aside in a large mixing bowl

2) Fry the onions and celery together until sufficiently sweated

3) Add vegetables to meat and also add crumbed bread

4) Add herbs and seasonings to taste

5) Add egg-and-milk mixture and mix all ingredients thoroughly

6) Put stuffing mixture into a well-greased casserole dish and cook for 40 minutes at 325°

*Note: we used to cook this recipe within the turkey, however in recent years there have been many warnings about the kinds of bacteria that can develop within a turkey if it is not cooked thoroughly enough. This is why it is best to cook the stuffing outside of a turkey and if you want it to taste a bit



9) Bake at 300° for 20 minutes

10) Cool on rack

DRINKS

Whether you like to have the occasional liquor-based cocktail around the holidays or you celebrate sans alcohol, special drinks to toast with are part of the holiday spirit and part of the fun.

Why not try out some of these classics and fun concoctions at your next holiday bash?

Homemade Eggnog

If you can't find the stuff in a carton or want to go it old school, use this recipe for homemade eggnog.

5 egg yolks

¾ cup of sugar

1 cup of heavy cream

2 cups of homogenized milk

1 ¼ cups of whiskey or cognac

¼ cup spiced rum

A pinch of salt

1 teaspoon of vanilla

½ teaspoon of nutmeg and then extra for garnish (fresh grated if available is always best)

1) Whisk yolks with sugar until creamy and sugar begins to dissolve

2) Add cream, milk, bourbon and rum and stir to combine

3) Stir in nutmeg and vanilla and chill well

4) Serve chilled on the rocks with a sprinkle of nutmeg if desired

This recipe can also be done without any alcohol if so desired. Simply swap out the booze for an additional ¾ cup of whole milk, an additional ¾ cups of cream and add 1-2 teaspoons of rum extract.

Please note that because this recipe does contain raw eggs, it is necessary to use the freshest eggs possible to avoid salmonella contamination. Wash the shells before cracking to ensure nothing gets into the egg once they are removed from the shell. Also note that while everyone is susceptible to salmonella, those who are immune-compromised, like young children, the elderly and the ill, should never consume anything with raw eggs.

Festive & Fruity Holiday Punch

This non-alcoholic fruit punch is always a delight at parties and is fine for everyone to enjoy.

1/3 of a cup of white sugar

1 litre of cranberry juice

2 cups of 100% pure pineapple juice

3 tablespoons of almond extract

1 2-litre bottle of ginger ale

Frozen cranberries to garnish

1) Mix together the first four ingredients and refrigerate overnight so that the flavours meld

2) Add the ginger ale just prior to serving

3) Add frozen cranberries if desired to decorate

Chocolate Chip Martini

1 ¼ ounces of Frangelico hazelnut liqueur

1 ¼ ounces of vodka

¼ ounce of Crème de cacao (optional)

1) Pour ingredients into a cocktail shaker with a cup of ice cubes

2) Strain and pour into a martini glass

3) Garnish with a maraschino cherry if you happen to have one on hand

The Candy Cane

Crushed candy canes to rim the glasses and extra canes for garnish

1 ounce of vodka

¼ ounce of peppermint schnapps

½ ounce of white chocolate liqueur

2 ounces of half-and-half cream

1) Crush a few candy canes and rim your glass with them first by dipping the edge of the glass into hot water and then into your candy cane mixture

2) Pour the remaining ingredients into a glass with ice cubes and garnish with a candy cane as a stir stick

Festive & colourful Mimosa

1) Blood-orange juice

2) Chilled sparkling white wine

While traditionally this beverage has always been served as a mix of champagne and orange juice, you can add some holiday flare to it by substituting blood-orange juice which is sometimes available in grocery stores with the fresh squeezed type of juices. Alternately you can also make a poinsettia by mixing white wine with cranberry juice. We suggest that you use sparkling white wine or mousseux instead of actual champagne, which is usually expensive and should be drunk on its own.

And remember...

The holidays are supposed to be all about having fun and spreading good cheer which is why moderation is an important thing to remember both when it comes to drinking and indulging in festive treats while celebrating the holidays and so enjoy responsibly.

On behalf of the Nation, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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May the magic
of Christmas touch
everyone in Eeyou
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Christmas round-up

Community events during the holiday season

By Akiva Levitas

So Christmas is right around the corner and everyone is getting ready for the influx of family members as well as festive dinners. Snow has fallen already and things are gearing up for a good holiday season.

In some places Christmas celebrations have already happened. But there is plenty more planned for the upcoming holiday season. Each of the communities will be holding their annual Christmas mass as well as communal feasts.

So here a small glimpse at what is going on in some of the communities.

In Chisasibi, things have already gone into full holiday mode with the

Firefighters Christmas fundraising drive that was held on December 1. Chisasibi held their Christmas fun night on December 3 as they had to move it up from December 2 because of the funeral of Thomas Pachano.

But not to worry, the fun will continue on until after New Year's with a Christmas light contest on December 14 as well as a snow sculpture contest being held between Christmas and New Year's.

Eastmain will begin their festivities on December 24 and they will continue until the New Year. On December 27 there will be a Christmas party at the school gymnasium for an older crowd starting at 7pm. Lots of fun stuff to do there as well as cash prizes, such as a \$100 prize for the highest points in darts with a game every hour plus other ways to win.

On December 28, there will be a youth day at the school gymnasium with fun activities for all the young ones to

participate in and win some cash prizes between 5pm and 7pm. The highest going for first place in the Balloon Protection, Romantic Waltz, and Tights of War competitions and the prize is \$120.

The next day, December 29, Santa will visit the church at 2pm for children under 12, and at 7pm there will be a community dance that will include a kinect dance competition. On December 30, there will be an Elders' night out starting at 7pm. Cash prizes for events and darts ranging from \$20 to \$100.

On New Year's Eve, there will be a Christmas sofa sleigh event as well as a skidoo race. There will also be a celebrity lip-syncing concert followed by the church service. Traditional Santa farewell of shooting up in the sky will end the night. On New Year's Day, the community potluck supper will be held at 7pm in the school gymnasium.

In Nemaska, there will be Christmas festivities from December 26 to January 1. Before then, on December 20, there will be the annual Christmas concert held at the high school starting at 6pm.

In Mistissini, there will be Christmas activities during the holidays between December 24 and January 1.

So enjoy whatever you do and have lots of fun over the holidays!



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Coping with grief

Frontline workers, family and friends make all the difference during the holiday season

By Dan Coyle

The First Nations and Inuit Suicide Prevention Association of Quebec and Labrador (FNISPAQL) recently held its annual conference in Montreal. This year, the Dialogue for Life 2011 Conference marked the 10th anniversary of the association and brought together hundreds of frontline workers from Aboriginal communities across Quebec, Labrador and the north as well as individuals and families who have been personally impacted by the suicide of a friend or a loved one.

The focus of the conference is to provide education for frontline workers who work directly with individuals at risk in their communities, as well as family members.

"We have people come to Montreal and get that five-day intensive suicide prevention training. Many of these workers have become master trainers and offer workshops to anyone who wants it," explains Thelma Nelson, FNISPAQL's interim director.

"This training is so important for workers to help people in need. Before my training, I wasn't able to ask someone 'Do you want to commit suicide?'" said

Nelson. "With the training, I was able to ask instead of running away. And when you are working with someone who is so down then you ask and if the answer is yes, then you find someone to deal with it."

In addition to a number of workshops that focus on skills development for frontline workers, Dialogue for Life also offered sessions that focused on grieving, the healing process and the important role that spirituality plays in both.

"There are a lot of reasons why there is suicide in our communities," said Nelson. "This year when we were planning this conference, I asked the Creator to help me decide what kind of training do we need; what kind of training do they need to help their people."

"In the beginning, the association was for frontline workers, but now families are coming to grieve."

Indeed, the conference program is filled with sessions that focus on grieving and healing. One such session featured a tree built from paper placed in the middle of a healing circle. On each sheet of paper was the name of a person who had been lost to suicide. These sessions are intensely personal, emotional and spiritual, and may be difficult for some people to experience.

Nelson agrees. "Not everyone makes it. It can be overwhelming for some. And the grieving process for people who have lost someone to suicide or other sudden loss takes a long time. But these trainers, the people running these sessions are really powerful – they bring out what needs to come out."

One of those trainers is Dennis Windigo, a well-respected trainer and psychotherapist in the areas of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders and Complex Trauma. He is also the founder of Aboriginal Peoples Training Programs, based in Thunder Bay. At Dialogue for



The tree was made of paper. Each piece of paper has the name of a person who was lost to suicide and who was being grieved.

Life 2011, Windigo presented a workshop called "Grieving Through the Holidays After a Suicide".

While the workshop is structured around helpful tips and counsel on how to cope with grief during the holiday season, the real focus of the half-day session was on the many individuals in attendance who shared their stories of loss and grief with those around them.

Whether as a result of suicide, accident or illness, the loss of a loved one can have a profound impact for years on those who are left behind. During Windigo's session, people, both young and old, told the stories of who they lost, how they were lost and what they have done to cope. Not everyone who shared during the session felt that they had coped well. Some spoke of the importance of building closer bonds with family, while others talked through tears about how their loss had torn apart their family or taken them down the road to substance abuse, violence and other self-destructive behaviour. Some spoke of



Hydlo and FRIENDS unplugged

Finding cisco? You bet!



Hydlo and Friends is a program broadcast by JBCCS. Its hosts, Luke and Réal, discuss various matters related to Hydro-Québec activities on Eeyou Istchee lands. Swapping their mike for a pen, they invite you to explore various aspects of the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project.

"Finding cisco" declared a headline in the September issue of *The Nation*...and find cisco they did! The second year of fishing following the partial diversion of the Rupert ended on an encouraging note: from August to October, over 16,000 cisco were caught, mainly in the segment between the estuary and Smokey Hill. It was a busy summer indeed.

Following the cisco from the bay to the river

Considerable effort was put into monitoring the arrival of the cisco in the Rupert. As of mid-July, Cree fishermen set their nets starting at Pointe Goyau, about 35 km north of Waskaganish. Then, on August 1st, the fishermen watched closely as the cisco migrated upstream from the estuary to the foot of the Smokey Hill rapids, to see whether or not the river was providing any attraction for the species.



David Blackned, fishing in Rupert Bay



▲ Sanders Weistche, Jeremy Moar and Roderick Blueboy scoop-net fishing on the south shore of Smokey Hill.
 ▲ Harry Erless, David Erless and Willie Weistche at the Smokey Hill site, on the north shore.

Harry Erless

Building scoop-net fishing pools

Meanwhile, tallymen Clarence Cowboy and Sanders Weistche and their crews were building small pools at the north and south banks of the Rupert at the foot of the rapids, to get ready for the traditional scoop-net fishing season.

The pools proved to be quite effective! At the end of the season, the scoop-net fishermen had harvested over 8,000 cisco, mainly in the pool opposite Gravel Pit. Most of the remaining fish were caught with gill nets. According to the two tallymen concerned, the fish were very abundant!



Clarence Cowboy, tallyman of trapline R11



What's next?

The members of the Smokey Hill Liaison Committee met in Val-d'Or on November 3 to discuss the last season and plan for the 2012 season. The participants were in

unanimous agreement about the importance of continuing the work already started and of fostering interest among the younger generations. Bring on 2012!



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the importance of spirituality as they worked through their grief while others talked about how the best way forward for them was to seek out others in need and help them.

But all who shared their stories and experiences, shared one thing in common – the desire to heal and to move on with their lives.

“To go through a healing process, to help people who have a trauma in their bodies, it paralyzes them and they are unable to move on with their lives,” explained Windigo. “There are many things that contribute to trauma, for example residential-school experience. It is about getting those parts of the body unstuck and releasing the trauma. People are really connected to their trauma and react to their trauma. The key is to get them connected to the self and not the trauma, and get them to realize they are bigger than the trauma and get them the resources that they need.”

A survivor of residential school, alcohol-and-drug abuse and family violence, Windigo speaks frankly about his troubled past and the personal journey he has taken that has enabled him to develop programs that foster healing, such as the one he delivered at Dialogue for Life 2011.

“I call that my period of darkness,” said Windigo. “I was suffering from the fallout of residential school, the trauma of what happened in my life afterward. I struggled with alcohol, drugs, violence and a very unhealthy lifestyle. In 1989, I started to come out of that darkness and started to realize a lot of things about life; that I am not the only one in that pain.

“When I was living in that darkness I thought I was the only one and I felt so alone. When I came out of that, I realized that there are a lot of people who are suffering. And I want to make a difference. I want to see if I can help. I want people to have a place to go to and have someone to talk to.”

Not surprisingly, Windigo believes that personal spirituality plays a major role both in the suffering people experience and the healing process that they must go through to get on with their lives.

“Even with the trauma, when people carry trauma, it is a very spiritual thing. But it is heavy, it is full of fear and when you get that release it is like a spirit comes through your body and releases it and gives it to the Creator or God or whatever people believe in,” explained Windigo.

“Everybody has a spiritual side, a connection to something greater than



Thelma Nelson, Interim Director of First Nations and Inuit Suicide Prevention Association of Quebec and Labrador

themselves that is helping them. I would say I am a spiritual man, but during my period of darkness I was very confused and I didn't want to believe in anything. But spiritual things did happen and I saw signs that I was in the right place at the right time, especially when I was in detox and my body wouldn't stop shaking and a spiritual thing happened. I connected with a spirit in the sky and a great calmness came over me and told me that I am exactly in the right place that I needed to be at that time in my life.”

The holidays are not only a difficult time for people grieving a loss. It can be a difficult time for the people close to those who are grieving. Quite often, people are unsure as to how to best comfort and meet the needs of people who may not be viewing the holiday season as a joyful time.

Windigo offers some simple advice for those who wish to comfort friends and loved ones in pain.

“The most important thing is human contact – the human touch. And to include those who are grieving in various ways, to be with them. Sometimes it is just a handshake, but show people that you care,” he said.

“I always go for connection. Make the connection, build the connection. Even with people who are grieving and don't want to celebrate the holidays, make the connection to them. Connect to them as to how the world is for them at that moment.

“And be respectful.”



Dennis Windigo is a trainer and psychotherapist and founder of Aboriginal Peoples Training Programs



Wishing you the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the peace
of His love at Christmas and always.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

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Christmas report card

Here's how all the First Nations' players in the NHL stack up so far

By Dan Coyle

The National Hockey League is approaching the 1/3 mark of the 2011-2012 season. Here is a quick look at how NHL players of Aboriginal descent are performing so far this season. All the players' stats below were recorded on December 5.



Aaron Asham knocks out Washington Capitals' Jay Beagle

Aaron Asham – Pittsburgh Penguins, RW

Métis

Hometown: Portage La Prairie, Manitoba

GP	G	A	Pts	+/-	PIM
27	2	6	8	-6	33

Asham has bounced back well from a concussion that effectively ended his 2010-2011 season. He remains a fixture in the Pittsburgh Penguins lineup in his traditional role as tough guy while remaining on pace for his customary 20-30 points. The sole black mark on Asham's year is his well publicized on-ice showboating following a fight with Washington Capitals' Jay Beagle, during which Asham knocked Beagle unconscious with two punches. Beagle has yet to return to action due to head injuries suffered in that fight.

Rene Bourque - Calgary Flames, LW

Métis

Hometown: Edmonton, Alberta

GP	G	A	Pts	+/-	PIM
26	8	3	11	-2	14

Is it possible that Rene Bourque has peaked at the tender age of 29? After a career year in 2009-2010, when Bourque potted 27 goals and 58 points, it has been a steady downward slide for Jarome Iginla's



Rene Bourque of the Calgary Flames

usual linemate. Bourque remains on pace for 20+ goals this season, but his uninspired play has made him the subject of constant trade rumours, and with the Flames falling back from the rest of pack in the Western Conference, it would not be a surprise to see Bourque moved before the NHL trade deadline.

Kyle Chipchura - Phoenix Coyotes, C

Métis

Hometown: Westlock, Alberta

GP	G	A	Pts	+/-	PIM
14	0	3	3	-2	17



Kyle Chipchura, now with the Phoenix Coyotes, goes toe-to-toe.

The former 1st round pick of the Montreal Canadiens and captain of Team Canada's entry in the 2006 World Junior Hockey Championship has struggled to find his place in the NHL. Now with the Coyotes, his third NHL team, Chipchura has begun to adapt to his role as a penalty killer and two-way centre, playing on the third or fourth line. The 25-year-old spent much of October with the minor league Portland Pirates of the AHL, but has been a regular in the Coyotes lineup since his recall in early November. Chipchura is still looking to score his first NHL goal since the 2009-2010 season.

Vernon Fiddler – Dallas Stars, C

Métis

Hometown: Edmonton, Alberta

GP	G	A	Pts	+/-	PIM
26	3	8	11	0	14

Few would expect that a line of Vernon Fiddler, Eric Nystrom and Radim Vrbata would represent much of an offensive threat. But during the month of November, the grinders led the way for the resurgent Dallas Stars, combining for 22 points. While few expect the trio to maintain such a relatively torrid pace, the possibility exists this season for 31-year-old



Vernon Fiddler of the Dallas Stars

Fiddler to put up career numbers and make a major contribution as the Stars seek to return to the NHL playoffs for the first time since 2008.

has struggled all year. Price's recent outstanding play has allowed the Habs to steal points in games where they have otherwise been badly outplayed. However, barring a major turnaround on the ice by the Canadiens, Price is unlikely to hit the 40-win mark this season.

Sheldon Souray – Dallas Stars, D

Métis

Hometown: Elk Point, Alberta

GP	G	A	Pts	+/-	PIM
26	4	9	13	8	37



Sheldon Souray of the Dallas Stars

The prodigal son returns. After an injury shortened 2009-2010 season followed by a public battle with the Edmonton Oilers that led to his exile in the AHL for the entire 2010-2011 season, Sheldon Souray is back. And his performance is a big reason why the Dallas Stars are one of the surprise teams in the NHL this season. Souray's performance and leadership were recently rewarded when the Stars designated him as an alternate captain following an injury to Stars' captain Brenden Morrow.

Jordin Tootoo - Nashville Predators, RW

Inuit

Hometown: Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

GP	G	A	Pts	+/-	PIM
26	3	6	9	-1	45

After three seasons plagued by injury and personal problems, Jordin Tootoo appears to have gotten his NHL career on track. Tootoo has played every game this season for the Nashville Predators, however he did receive a two-game suspension for his controversial hit on Buffalo goalie Ryan Miller in early December. Tootoo is on pace for a 30-point season, a personal best, and has become one of the premier agitators in the NHL, successfully getting under the skin of opponents around the league and becoming a rallying point for his teammates.



Jordin Tootoo of the Nashville predators

Cody McCormick – Buffalo Sabres, RW

Band/Nation: Chippewa, Mohawk

Hometown: London, Ontario

GP	G	A	Pts	+/-	PIM
17	0	2	2	-3	24



Cody McCormick of the Buffalo Sabres drops the hammer on Columbus Blue Jacket Mike Commodore

Few players understand the hard work required to stay in the NHL as well as Cody McCormick. After three successive seasons playing under one-year contacts, McCormick was finally inked to a multi-year deal by the Buffalo Sabres this past summer. However, at press time McCormick remains sidelined with a concussion he suffered in a game versus Montreal on November 14. Given some of the physical battles the Sabres have been involved in of late, the team is eager to get the feisty McCormick back in the lineup.

Carey Price – Montreal Canadiens, G

Ulkatcho First Nation

Hometown: Vancouver, BC

GP	W	L	OTL	SO	GAA	Save %
23	10	8	5	2	2.23	.919



Montreal Canadiens goalie Carey Price celebrates with P. K. Subban

After a slow start to the season, picking up just one win in his first seven appearances, Price has returned to form and has been one of the few bright spots on a Canadiens squad that

Tribute to Rev. Samuel Hughboy

by Bishop Tom Corston

Samuel Samson Hughboy was born at Fort George on a cold winter day on January 14, 1916 to Betsy and Matthew Hughboy, one of seven children. He grew up and learned how to live "on the land". When still a young man he married Frances Gilpin and Nellie was born. Tragedy struck, however, when both mother and baby died in the harshness of life in those days. He later married Sarah Visitor who was to be his life partner until her own death on December 6, 1995, after 52 years of marriage. Together they had eleven children. At this death, Sam was survived by nine of them as well as 45 grandchildren, 87 great-grandchildren, 7 great, great-grandchildren, (a great, great, great grandchild was days away from birth when he died). In 2001 his son Matthew died and a second son, Walter, died in 2004. While Sam remained strong he felt that losing a child was like a piece of him was taken and the void could not be filled.



Samuel loved to hunt and trap having learned from his father and grandfather, providing for his family throughout the years. Even in old age, Sam would still head out across the river with a strong stride on his snowshoes to set and check his snares. His children and grandchildren have many happy memories of living out on the land with Sam, listening to his story-telling as he carved a figure or made a new tool. Hours were enjoyed as he read the Bible and said the prayers with his family and then sang a few hymns. It was said that Sam knew every hymn in both the Horton and the Walton Cree hymn books.

Sam's career in the church started in the 1960s when he served at Paint Hills (the early name for Wemindji) as one of the Catechists. He later expressed his desire to be ordained so in 1972 he was sent to Moose factory for two years of training under the guidance of canon Redfern Louttit. He was ordained to the Diaconate in 1974 at Rupert's House (now Waskaganish) and then raised to the Priesthood by Archbishop James Watton on Holy Cross Day, September 14, 1975 at Diocesan Synod in Kirkland Lake. Following ordination Sam was appointed the Incumbent at Eastmain, where many of his family joined him and enjoyed a happy and fulfilling ministry for seven years. Memories of time in Eastmain include stories of Sam owning a truck in which he drove around the community. It was a tribute to Samuel that so many came to his funeral from Eastmain.

In 1981 Sam retired and returned to Wemindji, but of course, he continued to assist at services, officiate at weddings and baptisms until he felt he could no longer do so after the passing of his wife Sarah. He married most of his grandchildren, the final one being in 1998. In 2008 he agreed to baptize two of his great-grandsons.

Indeed an awesome life; on behalf of the Cree Nation of Wemindji, Thank you so much Rev. Samuel Hughboy. You certainly left a legacy.

"Wherever you are whatever you do
take care of your feet"

Samuel Hughboy



Bridging the generations

The Trickster Effect brings together youth and Elders

By Daniel Coyle

The trickster has long played an important role in the oral traditions of Aboriginal peoples around the world. For some, the trickster may be a dangerous or destructive being, for others, an adventurous and humorous friend. In either case, the trickster is typically a creative force and an important part of people's spirituality, at the same time helping to ensure that cultural and oral traditions are passed from generation to generation.

The trickster is also central to a socio-cultural program recently delivered in Waswanipi called the Trickster Effect.

Developed by Project Exeko (www.Exeko.org), a non-profit organization based in Montreal, the Trickster Effect uses storytelling, singing, circus workshops, games and other exercises, to lead young people toward the progressive development of a traditional Aboriginal tale that has been passed on to them by Elders in the community. The young people then present the tale on stage to their community.

"The main idea is to strengthen the links between generations; give the kids, Elders and family members the tools to share," explained Francois-Xavier Michaux, co-founder of Projet Exeko. "We hope that through the Trickster Effect, kids learn more about their identity, which can often be missing."

The Trickster Effect program offers young people and Elders a place to meet, where they can learn, interact and gain value from each other. The activities central to the program help young people in their quest for identity by celebrating their culture, creating intergenerational links, developing their sense of belonging, while at the same time teaching them new skills like juggling, acrobatics and beat-boxing. The production and presentation of the tale at the end of the program gives the young people a positive, successful experience and helps them develop a sense of trust and self-esteem.



photo by Annie-Claude Roberge / Rights - Baie James Tourism

Many of the exercises and activities are created to provide an opportunity for the youth and the adults to express the sometimes difficult realities that they may have experienced. The program also creates awareness of healthy lifestyle habits through physical activities and snacks.

In addition to the Trickster Effect, Brighter Futures delivers a wide variety of programs, including summer day-camp, preteen after-school and evening programs, suicide prevention training, babysitter training courses, Waswanipi Day and Chiiwetau activities. As a result, the decision was made to run the

"THE ACTIVITIES CENTRAL TO THE PROGRAM HELP YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR QUEST FOR IDENTITY BY CELEBRATING THEIR CULTURE, CREATING INTERGENERATIONAL LINKS, DEVELOPING THEIR SENSE OF BELONGING, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME TEACHING THEM NEW SKILLS LIKE JUGGLING, ACROBATICS AND BEAT-BOXING. "

The Trickster Effect was made possible through the cooperation of the Brighter Futures in Waswanipi. Funded by Health Canada, Brighter Futures delivers culturally sensitive programs and resources at a community-based and community-paced level.

Trickster Effect program at the same time as Chiiwetau in July 2011.

"In November 2010, we started the Trickster Effect as an after-school program in Waswanipi, working with Brighter Futures. It was the beginning of the winter, and the first program went



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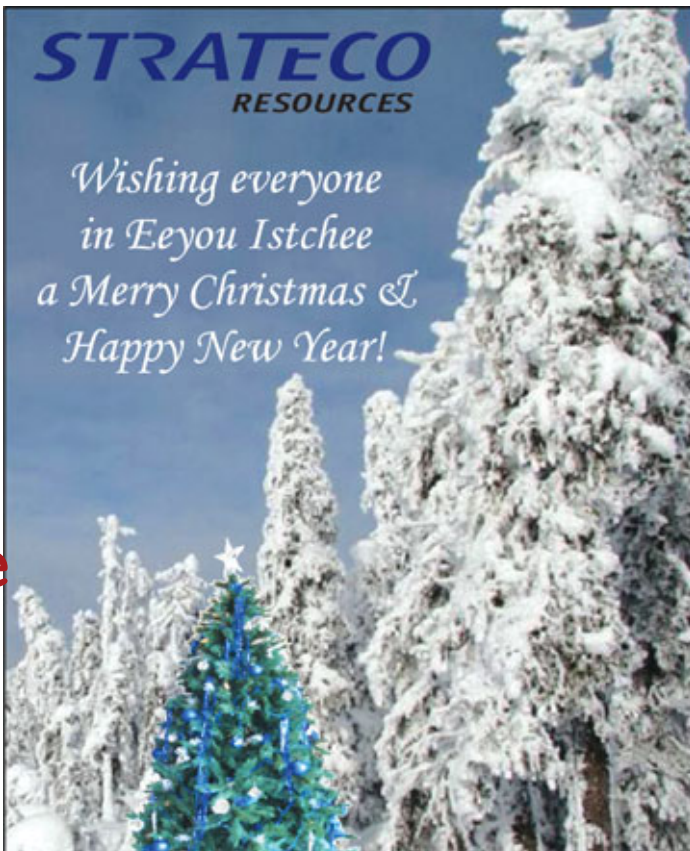
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pretty well,” said Michaux. “So we decided to do the project again during the summer. We were there for 20 days last July. It was decided that we would be part of a special event called Chiiwetau.”

Chiiwetau is a traditional gathering at the original settlement of the Hudson Bay post on Lake Waswanipi. The gathering usually takes place during the last two weeks of July and activities are managed by Brighter Futures.

“It was a great event and showed that the ties within the community were very strong and powerful,” added Michaux. “Chiiwetau gave us the perfect conditions to do the Trickster Effect. So we lived with the community, took part in all activities and the Trickster Effect was an

the young people presenting a traditional tale to their community on the final day of the program.

The program is overseen by two facilitator/artists, including one who comes from the community where the program is being delivered. The facilitator/artists are supported by a coordinator, while three trainees, who also come from the community, assist during the activities while receiving complete training that later enables them to implement the program autonomously.

This structure is designed to allow Michaux and Exeko to expand the Trickster Effect to other First Nations communities.

mostly Inuit. The Inuit children here are pretty far from their roots and we want to help them keep their roots and their sense of identity and culture.”

While Michaux and the Exeko team have enjoyed some success in developing and delivering the Trickster Effect program, it has not been without its challenges; particularly the challenge of building trust with the communities that they hope to serve.

“It is a long process. We don’t want to sell a product. This is not what we do. We want to work hand-in-hand with communities. We want to be in a partnership. We want to adapt the program to the needs of each individual community,” explained Michaux.

“A problem we have faced is that there are a lot of people who want to take advantage of the fact that there is funding available, but they don’t offer anything to the community. So communities are understandably very tentative; they wait and see before they trust. So we must be patient and keep working with the kids. We never force the door open. We open our hearts; respect the communities where we work.”

In the view of Eagle, the Exeko team’s efforts have had a positive impact on the young people of Waswanipi.

“They are great people,” said Eagle. “It was hard at the beginning, but they opened up and interacted with the children and Elders. The facilitator/artists are very outgoing, very outspoken and very trustworthy people. I love working with them. I recommend the program and hope that other communities will use it.”

So what advice would Michaux give to other organizations seeking to provide programs to First Nations communities?

“Do it for the good reason, first. If not, then just please stop!” said Michaux, emphatically.

“Be transparent, respect people, listen to people, because we have a lot to learn from First Nations communities. Sure we are doing a lot but I receive a lot every time I go there.

“First Nations people are willing to share; it is their natural way of being. It is part of their culture. But too many people take advantage.

photo by Annie-Claude Roberge / Rights - Baie James Tourism



activity that was proposed to the community and 60 kids took part.”

“The Trickster Effect is a great program,” said Erika Eagle, Social Development Assistant with Waswanipi Brighter Futures, and a participant in last summer’s program. “It’s a great program for children to learn about their traditions and to increase their interaction with Elders in the community.”

The program lasts for two weeks with a structure that includes 10 sessions of three hours each with both the young people and the adults. The program begins with a show presented to the community by the facilitator/artists, with

“We want to create a situation where we give them our program; where we reach the point where we do not exist anymore,” explained Michaux.

In addition to Waswanipi, Exeko has also delivered the Trickster Effect to the Innu community of Natashquan, with plans to work with other Innu and Cree communities across Quebec. The program has also been adapted to respond to the needs of Aboriginal communities in Montreal.

“We have launched a pilot project through the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal, and want to reach out to kids here in the city who are in foster care;



OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE HOLY FAMILY COMPLEX

On October 24, 2011 the Business and Community Service of le Centre d'études Collégiales à Chibougamau held the official inauguration of its new premises at the Holy Family Complex which is dedicated to the Nursing Program as well as the Nature Environment Technology Program.

These programs are made possible through the partnership of the Cree Human Resources Development, Cree School Board, Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, Niskamoon Corporation, Hydro-Québec and Direction régionale Nord-du-Québec Emploi Québec.

The guests were impressed by the new high-tech equipment of the Nursing laboratory, the only one in Northern Quebec. They also saw an interesting exhibit in the Natural Environment Technology facilities. The lunch was served by the students attending the training course "Supervision of hospitalities services and Native communities" held in Waswanipi.

First Picture: Theresa Mark, Cathy Shecapio, Shannon Chiskamish, Kim Laprise, Liza Bobbish.

Second Picture: Carole Tremblay, Ghislain Desjardins, Manon Cyr, Cathy Shecapio, Michel Desfossé, Mariette Bobbish, Réjean Lavoie, Yves Marchand

Third Picture: Mary Ann Neeposh, Charlene Ottereyes, Philippe Le Scelleur, teacher, Rosie Joly, Samantha Otter students in Supervision of hospitalities services and Native communities.

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Ethnic cleansing, Canadian style

There's one thing that Canada's First Nations chiefs can say in Stephen Harper's favour in his approach to the housing crisis at Attawapiskat; and that's that he achieved the unlikely feat of uniting the fractious and faction-ridden group of Native leaders across the country. They are coming together in solidarity against the prime minister's snarling, jackbooted response to a tragedy of his own government's making. And it's none too soon.

If there's a thread that runs through the tortured recent history of Attawapiskat, it's the same strand that ties together all of Native history on the continent: the dispossession of Aboriginal lands and resources.

It's hardly an accident that this government's first solution to the crises it has manufactured in the community is always the same. Evacuate the community. Offer to resettle residents elsewhere. Make it difficult to live on their traditional territory.

After a diesel spill contaminated the community's school three decades ago, the federal government didn't clean up and build a new school. It kept generations of school children in cold, vermin-ridden portables. In a bait-and-switch, successive Liberal and Conservative governments announced and then cancelled construction projects until the feds could no longer bear the international condemnation.

When flooding of a badly sited sewage treatment facility helped poison the water supply and contaminated homes in 2008, the first response by the Tory government was to tell people to move to Sudbury. Temporary housing brought in the following year is still being used today as the federal government refused to commit the funds necessary for minimally decent housing.

And after Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence declared a housing emergency last month as many families prepared to pass the northern winter in tents? Indian Affairs Minister John Duncan claimed never to have heard about problems there. Then Duncan offers to evacuate affected families from the community. But not before the feds blame the band council for the problems his ministry refused to address. Then the Tories have the incredible gall to put the community under third-party management – essentially throwing Attawapiskat into



receivership and suspending its right to democratic self-rule.

If it were a television show, we'd think this story was a farce so unbelievably incompetent and venal are the main characters representing the federal government. Unfortunately it's a reality show. After the prime minister himself publically lied about the source of problems in Attawapiskat, it became clear that this government is not simply incompetent; it is intentionally dismantling the community.

"This government has spent some \$90 million since coming to office just on Attawapiskat," Prime Minister Harper said in the House of Commons last week. "That's over \$50,000 for every man, woman and child in the community. Obviously we're not very happy that the results do not seem to have been achieved for that."

The implication is that the people of Attawapiskat are pissing away federal largesse on the devil knows what, and if they're living in tents or unheated shacks, it's their own damn fault. Certainly, that's flavour of the torrent of

DON'T FORGET WHAT'S GOING ON AN HOUR DOWN THE ROAD FROM THE COMMUNITY: DE BEERS' BRAND NEW DIAMOND MINE IS BEGINNING TO EXTRACT BILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF RESOURCES FROM CREE LANDS.

racist commentary unleashed by Harper's statement.

Except it's completely misleading. The federal government has not devoted \$90 million to housing in Attawapiskat as Harper implied, and he knows it. He also knows that every federal dollar spent in the community has to be approved by Indian Affairs.

As a remarkable piece published in the National Post by blogger Chelsea Vowel, a Cree woman living in Montreal, noted, "Most First Nations

have to get permission before they can spend money. That is the opposite of 'doing whatever they want' with the money. Bands are micromanaged to an extent unseen in nearly any other context that does not involve a minor or someone who lacks capacity due to mental disability. Any claims that INAC has no control over what bands spend their money on is false."

In fact, less than \$6 million has been budgeted by the federal government for Attawapiskat housing since 2006, and much of that has been necessarily spent on maintaining the existing housing stock in a region that face high construction and material costs. Meanwhile the actual need for housing would require \$84 million in immediate construction, not 7% of that figure spread over five years.

Nonetheless, this is the reasoning the Harper government used to disenfranchise the people of Attawapiskat by appointing an outside third-party manager to personally direct the community's financial affairs.

To their credit, Attawapiskat band members ordered the manager to leave the reserve after he showed up on December 5. The decision to impose third-party management has nothing to do with resolving the short-term housing crisis on her reserve, Spence said, adding that she's preparing for funding cuts as the government appointee takes control of her band's finances.

That's the common history of third-party management of band councils in Canada, according to legal observer Michael Posluns. "The outside manager typically begins by freezing all the band's accounts, and opening up an account in his own name, often at his own bank," Poslun writes.

"He does not spend much time in the community; he may administer Attawapiskat from Timmins or from Toronto.... When he closes or freezes all the band's accounts all the band's programs stop. I've seen situations where summer employment programs, hot lunch programs, recreation programs, road maintenance and every-

thing else that is needed to sustain a community came to a screeching halt. The only person who continues to get paid is the TPM himself. Typically, he pays himself 25% of the band's income for the period he is there."

So why all this neglect, malicious defamation and usurpation of power? Well, what's happening in Attawapiskat's territory? Don't forget what's going on an hour down the road from the community: De Beers' brand new diamond mine is beginning to extract billions of dollars worth of resources from Cree lands. It would be better if there weren't any pesky locals demanding a fair share of the riches being taken from their lands.

And that's the story underlying the history of ethnic cleansing in North America. So it was a good time for AFN chiefs to take a strong stand as they did in Ottawa December 6, requesting the intervention of a United Nations special rapporteur. If there was ever a time for people to stand together, it's now.



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John Ivison, *The National Post*

I did call you back and left a message in your voicemail.

Indeed, witnessing the horrible and deplorable living conditions of First Nation peoples of Attawapiskat gives a black eye to all Canadians. It is very sad and totally unacceptable for anyone to be expected to raise their children, their Elders and their families in such dreadful conditions.

I am disappointed and very disturbed when all parties are playing the blame game. The solution is to move away from pointing fingers and focus on the families.

I understand Attawapiskat has been in Indian Affairs imposed co- and third-party management for the last 12 years. While I agree that there is a need for transparency and accountability, one must consider the right of First Nations to participate in domestic decision-making which in its self is a human right. To participate in the decision-making is both rooted in a basic human right and essential to the effective enjoyment of that right.

The plight of Attawapiskat touches us all. Faith Tomatuk, a 14-year-old from Eastmain, raised \$30,000 from her community. When she first heard of the poor conditions of Attawapiskat, she immediately wanted to do something. She had toys, Barbie dolls and clothes she wanted to donate. She put posters out and was able to move the community by her actions. Faith has a passion to help others in need and is carrying on the values taught to her by her parents. Her father, Clayton Tomatuk, remembers the first time she wanted to help people in Attawapiskat. She was eight years old then, and there had been major flooding in the northern Ontario Cree community just before Christmas.

35 years ago my Cree Nation lived in similar living conditions as my fellow Cree neighbours across from James Bay.

Unfortunately, our housing conditions were only addressed after we had lost eight children to a gastroenteritis epidemic. This was in the 1980s. We had the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and promises of commu-

nity development, which included housing, water and sewage infrastructure. The only time the government deals with their obligations is when major incidences are reported in the media. Today we still have a backlog of 2500 units.

After many years of fighting in courts about the implementation of JBNQA, appearing before standing committees, submitting reports to INAC, meeting with various federal ministers and taking our issues to the international community, we now are able to build our communities. First Nations of this country shouldn't have to take these kinds of steps for the government to honour its treaty relationships with us. Shame on Canada.

The government of the day must address immediately the dreadful conditions of Attawapiskat. They need to set up a special team of experts with participation of the First Nation and produce specific measures in addressing the immediate needs of the people of Attawapiskat.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People came up with some very good recommendations that need to be revisited.

The government needs to deal with the Treaty issues, it needs to deal with First Nation share of the benefits of natural resources on First Nation Lands. The provincial governments must be involved in addressing the First Nation agenda.

I have said enough, as long others thing that they know what's best for First Nations and exclude the participation of First Nations regarding their future, we will never remove the black eye of Canada in its treatment of First Nations.

Matthew Coon Come

Grand Chief, Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)

Thankful

I would like to thank the people who recently nominated my son Anthony Hughboy for the position of Chief. I was very happy and proud of him, knowing that he had a lot of good ideas for the community and the future of Oujé-Bougoumou. I am proud of everything he has accomplished for the community in the past years while in the office.

One thing that disappointed me was what people were saying on Facebook! I thought Facebook was supposed to be user friendly. Is it not for friendly comments instead of criticizing people's faults?

No one should judge any person unless they look at themselves first. There is only one person who can judge, only God can judge us all. Every day, I thank God for both of my sons, Anthony and Darryl Hughboy, even though I don't get to see them very much. Also I thank God for all my grandchildren and their mothers too.

Agnes Hughboy

Wemindji





UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

It's time to start working together

by Xavier Kataquapit

Christmas is right around the corner. It is supposed to be a time of peace, love and good will to each other. Instead, I feel more or less heart-broken.

I thought that when Canada found out about my people in Attawapiskat and their housing crisis, they would respond in a positive way. I hoped that governments and the Canadian population would understand just how difficult life is for most Native people who are living on remote First Nations right across Canada.

Maybe I shouldn't be shocked but I am. It is like somebody turned a switch on and said it is okay to hate Native people. The comments I have been seeing online in the media and in letters as well as from feedback from people I know has been terrible. It is all of the same old stuff I grew up with. In plain words, it is hate. Many Canadians are commenting that First Nation leadership is corrupt, we are not owed anything and our treaties are worthless. We are lazy and don't work. We don't have any pride of ownership and we shouldn't have any benefits. We have too easy a life.

The sad part for me is that people I know and like think that it is okay to feel this way. One of my favourite topics is history so I understand that as imperfect humans we have always felt a need to look down on someone else. Many wars and conflicts have been fought with this as a root cause. It gets very scary when that is accepted by many people in the population.

Officially, people in mainstream media are careful what they say but in the online internet world where everyone can be anonymous, the hate is everywhere. The worst part is people think they are justified to make negative comments rather than help out. I am not saying that everyone is doing this as there are groups and individuals stepping forward to do fundraising and awareness campaigns to help my people. However, there are so many nasty and mean comments circulating around the internet. Maybe if everybody had to sign

their name to have something appear online or in any media, they would feel less free about spreading hate.

I don't have any answers to all the negativity I see. I have always felt like a second-class citizen but I have been feeling better about myself in recent years. I have tried to put behind me the fact that I have had to deal with so much intolerance and racism around me when I was growing up.

For the past week I have been very troubled and I am disheartened by so much anger and hate displayed by so many towards First Nation people.

If there was a location or a town in Canada where the people were living in the same destitute conditions of those on most First Nations, there would be such an outcry. As a matter of fact, that would never even happen. There would be an immediate response to help old people, children and the general population. So I am feeling very sad and confused.

If many Canadians think that First Nation people have it too good, I invite them to spend some time in a remote Native community. They will come away with a different way of thinking.

I am not saying that Native people are perfect as we still have a long way to go in terms of managing our communities. We need a whole new way of developing within this country. The only way that things are going to change for the better is if we all pitch in to help each other. It's not just about giving money. It's more about respect, healing and teaching.

As everyone gets ready to celebrate what is supposed to be a giving and loving time of the year, I hope and pray that so much of this hate is replaced by positive words, encouragement and heartfelt assistance. The best Christmas gift this year would be for governments and First Nations along with the rest of the Canadian population to decide to work together to make things better.

Merry Christmas.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHDAYS

I would like to wish my cousins Lucas Shecapio and Solomon Capissit both a happy birthday! :D Lucas's birthday is on Feb 27 and Solomon on Feb. 1st; happy 18th birthday. From Shawin Shecapio

Happy birthday wish to jonas nathan linden rupert-mowatt who will be turning 16 years old on the 8th of december. We wanted to let you know you're the joy of our life n play some good hockey if you know what i mean, luv u jonas xxxxxxx from mom, dad, wawa, tasha n malika all the way from washaw sibi

Happy birthday greetings go out to marcus joseph rupert; happy belated birthday! He turned 12 years old on the 19th of october. He's always there to help ppl no matter what. I love you my baby boy n always gonna be mamma's boy xxxxxx from mom, dad,

wawa, tasha n malika all the way from washaw sibi

PERSONAL MESSAGES

HOUSE FOR SALE IN CHIBOUGAMAU. Cute bungalow in front of the beach, 4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom + 1, big heated garage. Close to all services, 5-minute walk to Main Street. Please call for a visit 418-748-2736 or write to Mireille.Reigneau@hotmail.com

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Merry Christmas to Googoom Annie C. Bosum & William Bosum, to Auntie Georgina Coonishish, Abel Ottereyes & To Amber-Lynn. Also to Micheline & Derek Shecapio & kids, to Micheline & George Shecapio & all the family from Norman, Brayden & Alicia Coonishish

Happy holidays & a safe New Year to all... all the way From Chisasibi ;)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared.
514-843-4333.

Kid's Help Phone Line:
1-800-668-6868
(www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth helpline:
1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parent helpline:
1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference:
1-800-265-2626
(www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference:

1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence:
1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center:
1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm)
(www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline:
1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal:
1-866-403-4688.
(www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec:
1-866-277-3553

Residential School Survivors:
A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: <http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html>

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The Board of Directors and the entire team at the Niskamoon Corporation wish you all a most wonderful holiday season.

Honor the moments spent with your beloved ones, smile at every occasion you get and be humble with every little good deed a person does.

May you be thankful and respectful to your elders, caring towards the young ones and you will be blessed with joy.

We wish you peace, health and prosperity for the New Year to come.

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